

Native American Caregiver Support Program (NACSP)

Kupuna Caregiver Support Program

The HANA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, Inc. (HCHC) is a private, non-profit service organization serving the Native Hawaiian community of Hana., Hawaii. Their mission is to improve the general health and well being of the people of Hana. One of their goals is to incorporate Native Hawaiian healing practices with Western medical practices.

HCHC provides medical care through their community health clinic, a culture-based wellness program, and other culturally relevant health, social service, employment training and community economic development programs. HCHC also administers the Title VI, nutrition and supportive services program.



Cheryl Vasconcellos, Director, Kupuna Caregiver Support Program

The District of Hana, a very rural community and one of the most isolated areas in the state of Hawaii, is 57 from the main urban areas on the Island of Maui. This 57 mile trip takes about 2.5 hours along a single lane road that winds through

tropical rain forests and along steep sea cliffs.

The District of Hana is made up of small, isolated settlements scattered over 233 square miles. A number of homes do not have electricity, telephones, or running water.

In 2001 HCHC was awarded a Native American Caregiver Support Program (NACSP) demonstration grant to develop their Kupuna Caregiver Support Program. Through this grant, they intend to increase access to available support services and develop additional support services needed by the caregivers by:

- Supporting and enhancing the capability of caregivers to meet the functional and health care needs of elders by developing caregiver skills;
- Providing period of respite for family members caring for frail elders;
- Improving the health and quality of life for caregivers; and
- Enabling elders to safely remain in their homes and community for the duration of their lives by caring for the caregiver.

INNOVATIONS

The Kupuna Caregiver Support Program developed an intensive training curriculum for family caregivers. To participate in the training, family caregivers had to make the following commitments:

- Participate in 40 hours of training;
- Participate in monthly support group meetings;
- Complete evaluations and other surveys;
- Provide care to family members; and;
- Request assistance from the program as needed.



The Kupuna Caregiver Support Program made the following commitments to caregivers participating in the training:

- Provide a hands-on training experience;
- Coordinate monthly support group meetings;
- Provide case management services;
- Provide assistance to support family caregivers; and
- Provide a monthly stipend to assist family caregivers in their role as caregivers.

An unexpected lesson learned from this demonstration project was that incentives to participate in the training change. At the beginning of the Caregiver Support Program, the monthly stipends were the “draw” that got the caregivers to participate. However, by the end of the second year of the Program, it was the relationships that the participants developed and the information they received that created the incentive for caregivers to participate. The stipend lost the significance it held in the beginning.

Several trainings have been conducted during the three years of the demonstration. Although the project did not offer stipends to the more recent training groups, it did not affect the number of participants. Word of mouth about the value of this training has created the need for more training opportunities and involvement in the program.

For additional information on the Kupuna Caregiver Support Program contact:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax (202) 357-3560; Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov; or contact our website at: www.aoa.gov